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SUBJECT: GERMAN VIEWS ON MAP, STRASBOURG/KEHL SUMMIT,
RUSSIA AND OTHER NATO, OSCE AND EU ISSUES

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Jeff Rathke. REASONS: 1.4
(B) AND (D).

11. (C) SUMMARY: German officials at the Chancellery and MFA told visiting EUR/RPM Director Bruce Turner October 2 that while they saw little chance of extending MAP to Georgia or Ukraine at the December NATO foreign ministerial, they agreed it was necessary to agree on a way ahead to fulfill the strategic commitment on membership made to these countries in Bucharest. The meetings took place before Chancellor Merkel's statement in St. Petersburg that the time was not ripe for Georgia and Ukraine to enter MAP in December. The Germans are optimistic about France following through on its plans to re-join NATO's integrated military structure and thought President Sarkozy could make a formal announcement about French intentions as early as the February 2009 Munich Security Conference. Germany regards the April 2009 NATO Summit in Strasbourg/Kehl as largely an anniversary event, so it is anticipating that the summit will be limited primarily to the 26 Allies and the two invitees, with a key being to launch work on an update of the NATO strategic concept. If there is a NATO-Russia Council (NRC) meeting, the Germans agree that it would probably be necessary to have NATO-Ukraine and NATO-Georgia meetings as well, although Turner countered it might be more appropriate to think in terms of the last two rather than a NRC. Chancellery officials argued that, contrary to popular perceptions, Germany and the U.S. are "really not that far apart" on their approach to Russia. While keen to re-start meetings of the NRC, assuming Russian compliance in withdrawing troops from the "buffer zones" in Georgia, German officials acknowledged there has been a "paradigm change" and agreed that it would be useful for the Allies to pre-coordinate their positions and to use the forum to press the Russians to implement the rest of the cease-fire agreement. A meeting with researchers at the German Institute for International and Security Studies revealed the high degree to which the German policy community views the Caucasus conflict as a NATO failure and NATO membership plans for Georgia and Ukraine as ill-advised. Also discussed during Turner's meetings with German officials were Afghanistan/ISAF, NATO Article 5 contingency planning, the prospective EU counter-piracy mission and OSCE issues. END SUMMARY.

INTERLOCUTORS

12. (U) During his October 2 visit to Berlin, EUR/RPM Director Bruce Turner had separate meetings with Chancellery Director of Security Affairs Geza von Geyr and Deputy Detlef Waechter; MFA NATO Office Director Bernhard Schlagheck; and MFA OSCE

Office Director Margit Hellwig-Boette. He also met with researchers Frank Kupferschmidt and Walther Stuetzle at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP).

MAP

13. (C) Von Geyr was blunt in saying that Germany saw "hardly any chance" for extending the NATO membership action plan (MAP) to Georgia and Ukraine at the NATO December Foreign Ministerial. Chancellor Merkel made this even more specific on October 2, when she told the press that the time was "not ripe" for MAP in December. Granting Ukraine MAP now had the very real possibility of fomenting instability and unrest given how divided the country was over the issue of NATO membership, and Ukraine needed more time to sort this out. On Georgia, the question was whether this was really the right time, so soon after the war with Russia. Extending MAP to Georgia now would be akin to rewarding Saakashvili for his irresponsible behavior in starting the conflict. Turner responded that MAP would not come close to making up for the high cost that Saakashvili has already paid for his actions, namely a humiliating military defeat and the long-term, if not permanent, loss of a considerable part of Georgian territory. Turner also noted that concerns about a negative Russian reaction to MAP should no longer play a controlling part in these deliberations, given that the Russians had already played this card. The damage was done.

14. (C) Both Von Geyr and Waechter said one of the German concerns about MAP, notwithstanding U.S. assurances that it

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was not a guarantee of NATO membership, was its clear "automaticity." Experience showed that once MAP was granted, the discussion immediately shifted "two days later" to membership and debates about when the invitation should be made. Turner wondered if German concerns on this score could not be met by either an understanding within the Alliance or a statement by the applicant that the MAP period would last a set amount of years at a minimum. Waechter questioned the ability to enforce such promises, especially since MAP, after all, was supposed to be performance-driven.

15. (C) Turner asked what Germany's proposed alternative plan was for fulfilling the Bucharest Summit pledge that both Ukraine and Georgia would become members of NATO. The Alliance was on the hook to bring these countries in, and it was not enough to simply say "no" to MAP. The credibility of NATO was at stake. Von Geyr agreed that the "strategic decision" to bring these two countries into the Alliance had already been taken, and it was now a question of coming up with a "tactical" plan to accomplish this. Von Geyr noted that Chancellor Merkel has confirmed the Bucharest commitment publicly several times in the past few months. Germany was by no means backing away from that promise. Schlagheck agreed with the need to be creative in devising a joint strategy on the way ahead. The main thing, he emphasized, was to avoid another public clash on this issue as occurred in the run-up to Bucharest.

16. (C) Schlagheck noted that, according to German reports of Secretary Rice's recent meeting with EU ambassadors in Washington, the Secretary had strongly emphasized the need to admit Georgia to MAP in December, but had hardly mentioned Ukraine at all. He wondered if it would not send a "disastrous message" to Ukraine if Georgia was granted MAP in December, but not Ukraine. Turner noted that the uncertain domestic political situation in Ukraine was an important factor and suggested that offering MAP to Georgia need not necessarily damage Ukraine's prospects over the longer term, since it would send the message to all that enlargement was proceeding and Georgia was in a more precarious position.

FRENCH REINTEGRATION INTO NATO

¶17. (C) Von Geyr said the French were still on track to re-join the NATO integrated military structure and thought President Sarkozy might formally announce French intentions as early as the February 2009 Munich Security Conference, if not at the Strasbourg/Kehl NATO Summit in April. Von Geyr noted that the French had linked reintegration into NATO with reform of their military forces and a strengthening of ESDP. With the recent publication of the French White Paper on Defense and National Security and the recent or planned launch of several ESDP missions (including a counter-piracy mission off the coast of Somalia beginning in November or December), Von Geyr thought the French preconditions would be in place to allow NATO reintegration to be launched at the Summit. He acknowledged, however, that many of the details of that reintegration remained to be worked out, especially how the NATO military command structure will be transformed to accommodate the French and the degree to which the French will fill many of the lower-ranking positions at SHAPE and in other NATO commands.

STRASBOURG/KEHL SUMMIT

¶18. (C) Von Geyr said that Germany viewed Strasbourg/Kehl largely as an "anniversary summit" to celebrate NATO's 60th birthday, and therefore favored restricting the meeting to largely the 26 Allies, plus the invitees Albania and Croatia. He saw no need for a meeting with ISAF non-NATO troop contributors like at Bucharest. Whether it made sense to have a NATO-Russia Council (NRC) remained to be seen and would depend largely on developments over the next few months. Turner countered that it might make more sense to have a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC) and the NATO-Georgia-Commission (NGC) than the NRC, if one had to choose. MFA NATO Office Director Bernhard Schlagheck agreed that an NRC would have to be in addition to an NUC and NGC, and not the other way around.

¶19. (C) Von Geyr said one of the most substantive actions to

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be taken at Strasbourg/Kehl would be to "kick-start" work on updating the Alliance's 1999 Strategic Concept. Von Geyr agreed that Russian behavior in the Caucasus represented a "paradigm change," and that this would need to be reflected in the new strategic concept. He acknowledged that this would probably have to entail specific references to Russia.

RUSSIA

¶10. (C) Von Geyr thought Germany and the U.S. were "really not far apart" on their approach to Russia; the difference was just a matter of tone. While German leaders were not inclined to use the kind of tough language in public that Secretary Rice had used in her September 18 German Marshall Fund Speech, recent Russian behavior in the Caucasus had destroyed most of the "illusions" Germans had held in the 1990s about the "new" Russia.

¶11. (C) Von Geyr thought that Moscow, through its aggressive and disproportionate actions, had maneuvered itself into a "strategic dead-end." While the Russians were still celebrating their "tactical success" in taking control of both South Ossetia and Abkhazia, it would hopefully dawn on them in the coming weeks and months that this, in fact, had worsened their strategic position in the world. To help them come to this realization, it was important for the international community to maintain a strict non-recognition policy in regards to the illegal seizure of these break-away regions. Chancellor Merkel had gone to St. Petersburg October 2 for the annual bilateral government consultations with Russia armed with all the appropriate talking points on this matter. However, von Geyr thought it was unrealistic to expect the Russians to draw down their forces in South Ossetia and Georgia to pre-August 7 levels any time soon.

¶12. (C) Turner agreed that this might be the case, but

emphasized that it was important that Russia pay a price for refusing to fully implement the six-point cease-fire agreement. Von Geyr thought that Russia was already paying a price through the NATO and EU policy of "no business as usual." Germany agreed that no further meetings of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) or the PrepCom should be held until it is clear whether Russia has fulfilled its obligations to pull its forces out of the so-called border zones around South Ossetia and Abkhazia by October 10, although Germany did see a need for continued political dialogue. Von Geyr emphasized that if, in fact, Russia fulfills this obligation, Germany would favor resuming NRC and PrepCom meetings, but agreed that the changed situation with Russia, and the fact that it has not fulfilled its other cease-fire commitments, justifies pre-coordination of Allied positions in advance of any NATO-Russia meetings, during which Allies should use the forum to press the Russians to implement the rest of the cease-fire agreement. Schlagheck sounded the same theme, saying that it would be "foolish" to shut down this communication channel and expressing the hope that there could be an NRC Ambassadorial meeting by year's end, albeit perhaps with a reduced agenda.

NATO ARTICLE V PLANNING

¶13. (C) Schlagheck said that Germany was "comfortable" with the recent discussion that NATO Defense Ministers had on Article 5 contingency planning in London. He agreed that the key was to walk the thin line between reassuring the Balts and others that the Article 5 commitment on collective defensive was operative, but without provoking a negative reaction by the Russians that could actually increase the threat against these countries. He said this kind of prudent planning is exactly what we would expect SACEUR to do. Schlagheck thought, however, that it was important that any new contingency planning be based on an updated general threat assessment, as provided in NATO document MC-161.

AFGHANISTAN/ISAF

¶14. (C) Waechter said the German government had been prepared to include in the renewal of the ISAF parliamentary mandate for the Bundeswehr an authorization for German aircrews to participate in the planned NATO AWACS mission in Afghanistan. However, because of French opposition to the proposed

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common-funding arrangement, it was clear that no NATO decision on the mission would be taken before the renewed ISAF mandate is considered and voted on by the Bundestag in mid-October. Therefore, AWACS authorization will not be included in the ISAF mandate. If and when a NATO decision on AWACS is forthcoming, the German government will re-evaluate how to obtain the necessary parliamentary mandate to cover Bundeswehr participation. Waechter indicated that Germany's preference would be to wait to provide the necessary authorization until the ISAF mandate comes up for its next renewal in December 2009.

¶15. (C) Waechter also said that the renewed ISAF mandate would not include additional authority for the Bundeswehr to engage in counter-narcotics in Afghanistan. He said that SACEUR's proposal on this score remained a matter of debate, with at least five Allies expressing concerns. He expected this to be a prime topic of conversation at the October 9-10 NATO Defense Ministers meeting in Budapest.

¶16. (C) Waechter indicated that Germany had no problems with plans to streamline the U.S. military command structure in Afghanistan by bringing the Combined Security Transition Command (CSTC) and the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF) under COMISAF GEN McKiernan, in his capacity as the senior U.S. military commander in the country. While expressing concern about the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan, Waechter indicated that Germany remained strongly committed to the ISAF mission. He said that

notwithstanding the Social Democratic Party's historical record of running on a "peace" platform, it was notable that the SPD chancellor candidate for the September 2009 Bundestag elections was FM Steinmeier, and that he had up to now avoided playing politics on the Afghanistan issue.

EU COUNTER-PIRACY MISSION

¶17. (C) Waechter confirmed that Germany planned to play an active role in the planned ESDP counter-piracy mission off the coast of Somalia. The German government will seek a Bundestag mandate for Bundeswehr involvement in the mission based on collective security provisions under Article 24 of the German Constitution (Grundgesetz). Waechter agreed with Turner that the mission had to be transparent, fully coordinated with NATO, provide added value to existing operations in the area, and not prevent NATO from considering its own options. He did not dispute Turner's point that the U.S. would continue to prefer to engage with the EU through NATO, and not directly. Waechter said that the current German government would strongly oppose any "Tervuren 2" initiative in connection to the counter-piracy mission, referring to previous Franco-German efforts to set up an EU military headquarters in Brussels. He agreed that there should be no competition or duplication with SHAPE.

OSCE

¶18. (C) Von Geyr noted that in the frequent conversations between Chancellor Merkel and President Bush, the OSCE is hardly ever mentioned. However, von Geyr thought the OSCE was potentially a very useful forum, especially in dealing with Russia, given the OSCE's good image in Europe as an objective and neutral conflict resolution organization. Germany was in favor of using the OSCE to bring Russia along on key issues and, where necessary, to isolate and pressure it to adhere to international norms.

¶19. (C) MFA OSCE Office Director Margit Hellwig-Boette noted that the Russians, despite repeated requests, have never provided any further details on President Medvedev's proposal for a pan-European Security Conference. She thought that the Russians might use the OSCE Ministerial Council in Helsinki in December to revive this idea. (NOTE: President Medvedev told the press October 2 that he shared details with the Chancellor on this topic, but we have not seen them yet. END NOTE.) Hellwig-Boette said Germany would strongly resist any effort by the Russians to change or undermine the Helsinki Accords or the rest of the OSCE "acquis." Whatever the Russians have in mind would have to go "on top of" established body of rules and norms. She hoped that the ministerial discussion at the December meeting could be

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focused on a broad theme, like unresolved conflicts, rather some OSCE-centric topic, noting that FM Steinmeier had been very pleased with last year's OSCE ministerial informal lunch discussion of Kosovo. She suggested that these and other issues could be worked out in a Quad meeting at deputy political director level two to three weeks before the OSCE Ministerial.

¶20. (C) Hellwig-Boette confirmed that Germany would not oppose two proposed OSCE border training projects for inside Afghanistan, although Germany was keen to ensure that any opposition from other OSCE members to this project not result in the Central Asian border training projects in the same package being held hostage. Noting that the draft decision referred to security being ensured through NATO/ISAF, she noted the need to coordinate with NATO/ISAF to confirm that it was truly in a position to provide the necessary security for the Afghanistan projects. (Note: The proposed training sites in Afghanistan lie in Germany's area of responsibility as commander of ISAF Region North.) Looking ahead, Hellwig-Boette was hopeful the Kazakh 2010 OSCE chairmanship in office would have positive spill-over effects in

convincing Central Asians about the benefits of engaging actively in the OSCE. She favored basing the proposed OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe as one way of bringing Tajikistan closer to the OSCE.

MEETING WITH RESEARCHERS

¶21. (U) Both Kupferschmidt and Stuetzle at the Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) were extremely critical of NATO's failure to prevent or stop the outbreak of violence in the Caucasus, wondering whether the EU was in the process of eclipsing NATO and the U.S. They were also bitterly disappointed that the NRC was not used as a channel of political dialogue with Russia "at precisely the moment when it was most needed," and argued that the absence of NATO action illustrated why it was so important to proceed to a new review of the Strategic Concept. They strongly opposed extending MAP to Georgia and Ukraine, claiming that these countries were no more democratic than Russia. They put the blame for the war squarely on Saakashvili and the Georgians, claiming that they had precipitated it by killing Russian peace-keeping soldiers. While the think-tankers approved of previous NATO expansion to central and eastern Europe, they clearly thought that the Caucasus region was beyond what should be NATO's final frontier. They wondered why the U.S. was keen on bringing Georgia into the Alliance in any event, claiming it would not contribute anything to the Alliance, and that Georgia would use its membership as a means to provoke Russia. They also expressed deep skepticism about admitting Ukraine to NATO, given its close identity to Russia and the bitterly divided public opinion there on the membership issue.

¶22. (U) EUR/RPM Director Turner has cleared this message.
TIMKEN JR